

Social Policy: Housing and Communities BA

Our Social Policy: Housing and Communities Pathway Degree will provide you with the opportunity to actively engage in the analysis of these and further cutting edge social issues and debates - thus, your degree will comprise a highly contemporary, dynamic and grounded programme of study. Your degree programme will also provide you with specialist modules, an internship, further optional placements, an opportunity to undertake a specialist research project and extensive careers and employability support; thus providing you with a route into a range of careers and professional pathways.

- Social Policy is a highly contemporary, dynamic and grounded academic subject and this degree will provide you with a route into a range of careers and professional pathways
- 88% of our graduates go on to work, or undertake further study after graduation
- Top 10 in Complete University Guide 2015



The BA Social Policy: Housing and Communities welcomes applications from international students. Over 4,500 students from 150 countries worldwide choose to study here at Birmingham, and we now boast one of the largest and most vibrant international student communities in the UK. Take a look at the [collaboration map \(/schools/social-policy/international/collaboration-map.aspx\)](/schools/social-policy/international/collaboration-map.aspx) in our [international section \(/schools/social-policy/international/index.aspx\)](/schools/social-policy/international/index.aspx) and find out what it is like to be an international student living and studying in Birmingham, as well as the global reach of the School. You can also [find out why our students love living and studying in Birmingham \(/undergraduate/birmingham/mybham/index.aspx\)](/undergraduate/birmingham/mybham/index.aspx).

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Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx>)

Course fact file

UCAS code: L4K4

Duration: 3 years

Places Available: 129 Across the department

Applications in 2013: 761

Typical Offer: BBB ([More detailed entry requirements and the international qualifications accepted can be found in the course details \(?OpenSection=EntryRequirements\)](#))

Start date: September

Related courses

[Social Policy BA \(/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-ba.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-ba.aspx)

[Social Policy: Crime, Policing and Community Justice BA \(/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-policing-community-justice.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-policing-community-justice.aspx)

[Social Policy: Health and Social Care BA \(/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-health-social-care.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-health-social-care.aspx)

[Policy, Politics and Economics with Year Abroad BA \(/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/policy-politics-economics-year-abroad.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/policy-politics-economics-year-abroad.aspx)

[Social Policy and Criminology BA \(/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-and-criminology.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-and-criminology.aspx)

[Social Policy with Year Abroad BA \(/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-year-abroad-ba.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-year-abroad-ba.aspx)

[Social Policy and Sociology BA \(/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-sociology.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-sociology.aspx)

[Policy, Politics and Economics BA \(/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/policy-politics-economics.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/policy-politics-economics.aspx)

Contact

Admissions Tutor:

Tina Hearn

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[School of Social Policy \(/schools/social-policy/index.aspx\)](/schools/social-policy/index.aspx)

[Institute of Applied Social Studies \(IASS\) \(/schools/social-policy/departments/applied-social-studies/index.aspx\)](/schools/social-policy/departments/applied-social-studies/index.aspx)

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Our Housing and Communities Pathway Degree is an inter-disciplinary programme and is therefore suitable for students who are currently studying a range of subjects at advanced level, including sociology, politics, geography, philosophy and ethics, history and media studies. The programme is located in a vibrant research institute and is led by academics who are specialists in the field of housing. In addition to specialist inputs on housing issues during your Housing and Communities Pathway Degree, you will also have the opportunity to take modules provided by experts in a range of related fields such as:

- Criminology
- Youth and Children
- Poverty, Assets and Wealth
- Migration
- Globalisation
- Political History
- The Voluntary Sector
- Faith
- Policy Analysis
- The Family

Your degree programme will provide you with opportunities both to build upon your specialism and also to engage with highly complementary areas of study.

Placement opportunities

Housing and Communities Pathway students will undertake a specialist placement during their degree programme. However, it is possible for you to gain further experiences if you wish, and there are many opportunities to do so. We also have our own specialist internship and careers advisor (see the 'Employability' tab on the main page) who provide students with a wide range of advice, support and contacts for work experience, placements and internships.

Why study this course

About the Institute

The Institute in which the Housing and Communities Pathway Degree is taught, is both friendly and supportive and students are encouraged to become involved in the work of the Institute and the University more broadly. There is a staff-student committee which provides a forum for regular meetings and discussion between staff and students. We also have an active Social Policy Student Society who arrange events, talks and debates. The Institute also organises and funds students events: for example, our students recently visited London and the Houses of Parliament. Each student is also provided with a personal tutor, whom they meet on a regular basis and with whom they review their academic and broader developmental progress. The Institute also provides a welfare tutoring system, for students who may need specialist support.

The Institute places an emphasis upon ensuring that students benefit from studying in a vibrant research environment. Consequently, there is a carefully crafted relationship between research activity in the department, module content and teaching, providing students with core skills in both utilising and undertaking research.



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In addition to your specialist Housing placement, further opportunities for placements and paid work are available. Our Internship and Careers Officers meet with students on a regular basis to share information about work opportunities.

The availability of these opportunities means that students on the Housing and Communities Pathway Degree are able to build up an excellent portfolio of experiences and contacts which have proved to be very valuable when students apply for jobs upon completion of their degree. The Institute also places a premium upon helping students to develop a wide range of transferrable skills. So, for example, encouraging and supporting the development of skills such as group and teamwork, project work, presentations, the production of briefing papers and policy reports are systematically woven into the structure and processes of your Housing and Communities Pathway Degree.

Modules

Modules available within your Housing and Communities Pathway Degree will enable you to acquire a range of skills which are valued by employers, including: critical enquiry; analytical skills; problem solving; research competencies; workload planning and management; convening working parties; team working; presentations; writing policy reports and producing briefing papers. You will also be able to choose optional modules such as the **[Personal Skills Award \(/undergraduate/careers/psa.aspx\)](#)**, which can provide you with the opportunity to develop further employment specific skills, for example, in leadership and project management. Optional modules are also available which provide opportunities to visit organisations and agencies and to gain a wide variety of placement experiences.

First year

Most people will not have previously studied social policy on a formal basis, nor had the opportunity to specialise in housing during their advanced level studies. The first year of your programme is designed to help you find your feet and get up to speed with the subjects through the study of some of the main relevant disciplines and contextual material. Core first year modules studied include: Introduction to Social Policy, Social Issues, and Research Methods. You can also choose a further three modules from a range of subject areas such as Urban studies, Politics, Sociology, Psychology and Planning. Taken together, your core and optional modules will help you begin the process of familiarising yourself with your housing specialism as well as enabling you to develop a good understanding of the broader context of housing policy.

Second year

Your second year core courses include Social Theory, and Social Research. Social Theory will help you to develop a deeper appreciation of how many of the issues and debates within the field of housing are formed, framed and negotiated. In your social research module you will focus upon gaining research skills for your third-year research based dissertation which will take a focus upon a housing question or issue of your choice. In addition, you will also undertake a specialist housing module in which you will study a wide range of contemporary housing issues and debates. You will also continue to have opportunities to tailor your degree to reflect your developing skills and interests through a range of complementary specialist module choices, for example:

- Crime Victims and Society
- Children and Young People
- Managing Health and Social Care
- New Migration and Superdiversity
- Social Inclusion
- Comparative Social Policy
- Policy into Practice

In your second year you can also choose to study modules from other departments if you wish to such as Urban Studies, Politics or Sociology, providing you with opportunities to tailor your degree around your personal interests.

Third year

The core courses in your third year are:

- Prospects for Social Policy
- Dissertation

In the Prospects module, as a member of a working group you will be able to undertake a project on a housing policy issue of your choice, you will produce a briefing paper, a Wiki, a policy report and you will also learn how to form and constitute a working party, engage in team work and develop further important transferrable skills. In the dissertation module you will undertake an in depth research-based dissertation, centred on a housing question or issue of your choice, supported by a specialist academic supervisor. Your dissertation is worth around a third of your final-year marks and your ability to choose a housing topic or issue which particularly interests or inspires you, will provide you with an excellent opportunity to enhance your marks in your final year.

For the remainder of your modules you can choose from a range of specialist options, examples would include:

- Criminal Justice
- Social Divisions and Diversity
- Health Policy and Practice
- Migration and Superdiversity
- Comparative Social Policy
- Poverty, Wealth and Assets
- Agency and Morality

You can also choose to study modules from other departments to reflect specific interests which you have developed over the course of your programme and to broaden your understanding of the social and political context of housing issues and policies.

Fees and funding

Standard fees ([/undergraduate/fees/fees.aspx](#)) apply

Learn more about **fees and funding** ([/undergraduate/fees/fees.aspx](#))

Scholarships

Learn more about our **scholarships and awards** ([/undergraduate/fees/funding/index.aspx](#))

We encourage applications through the University's

Access to Birmingham (A2B) Scheme ([/undergraduate/requirements/a2b/index.aspx](#))

Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: BBB

General Studies: Accepted

Additional information:

Other qualifications are considered – learn more about [entry requirements \(/undergraduate/requirements/index.aspx\)](/undergraduate/requirements/index.aspx)

A satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be required for September 2014 entry.

Additional information

An undergraduate subject degree brochure is available from Sue Gilbert: [s.c.gilbert@bham.ac.uk \(mailto:s.c.gilbert@bham.ac.uk\)](mailto:s.c.gilbert@bham.ac.uk) or tel: +44 (0)121 414 5709.

We hold [applicant visiting days \(/undergraduate/visit/avd/index.aspx\)](/undergraduate/visit/avd/index.aspx) in February and March, which you are most welcome to attend.

We run [Discovery Days \(/schools/social-policy/departments/applied-social-studies/social-policy/outreach/discovery-days.aspx\)](/schools/social-policy/departments/applied-social-studies/social-policy/outreach/discovery-days.aspx) for groups of students, which comprise a subject talk, a taster seminar, a student life talk, admissions advice and a campus tour. Please contact our Admissions Tutor, Tina Hearn (contact details above), if you, your school or college would be interested in one of these sessions.

International students:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 32 points to include English

Standard English language requirements apply

Learn more about [international entry requirements \(/undergraduate/requirements/international/index.aspx\)](/undergraduate/requirements/international/index.aspx)

Depending on your chosen course of study, you may also be interested in the Birmingham Foundation Academy, a specially structured programme for international students whose qualifications are not accepted for direct entry to UK universities. Further details can be found on the [foundation academy web pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx).

How to apply

Apply through UCAS at [www.ucas.com \(http://www.ucas.com/\)](http://www.ucas.com)

Learn more about [applying \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply)

UCAS

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is a UK organisation responsible for managing applications to university and college. UK, EU and international students applying for most undergraduate degree courses in the UK will need to apply through UCAS.

You submit an application via the [UCAS website \(http://www.ucas.com/\)](http://www.ucas.com/) with a list of up to five courses. All choices are confidential during the application process so universities and colleges considering an application cannot see your other choices. Applications must be completed by mid-January of the year that you wish to start university.

You can monitor the progress of your application using the [UCAS Apply system \(http://www.ucas.com/apply\)](http://www.ucas.com/apply).

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Key Information Set (KIS)

Key Information Sets (KIS) are comparable sets of information about full- or part-time undergraduate courses and are designed to meet the information needs of prospective students.

All KIS information has been published on the Unistats website and can also be accessed via the small advert, or 'widget', below. On the [Unistats website \(http://unistats.direct.gov.uk\)](http://unistats.direct.gov.uk) you are able to compare all the KIS data for each course with data for other courses.

The development of Key Information Sets (KIS) formed part of HEFCE's work to enhance the information that is available about higher education. They give you access to reliable and comparable information in order to help you make informed decisions about what and where to study.

The KIS contains information which prospective students have identified as useful, such as student satisfaction, graduate outcomes, learning and teaching activities, assessment methods, tuition fees and student finance, accommodation and professional accreditation.

Related links

[Why Birmingham? \(/undergraduate/birmingham/index.aspx\)](/undergraduate/birmingham/index.aspx)



(<http://as-coursecast-1.adf.bham.ac.uk/Panopto/Pages/Viewer/Default.aspx?id=46936cd7-fdb5-459a-bdf7-e0812b69d494>) Social Policy lectures take many different forms, some may be talks followed by a workshop, others are combined with small group exercises, group discussions, seminars, project or placement work. You can see a [sample lecture here \(http://as-coursecast-1.adf.bham.ac.uk/Panopto/Pages/Viewer/Default.aspx?id=46936cd7-fdb5-459a-bdf7-e0812b69d494\)](http://as-coursecast-1.adf.bham.ac.uk/Panopto/Pages/Viewer/Default.aspx?id=46936cd7-fdb5-459a-bdf7-e0812b69d494), 'Perceptions of and Responses to Youth Crime'.

As a Birmingham student you are part of an academic elite and will learn from world-leading experts. From the outset you will be encouraged to become an independent and self-motivated learner. We want you to be challenged and will encourage you to think for yourself.

Your learning will take place in a range of different settings, from scheduled teaching in lectures and small group tutorials, to self-study and peer group learning (for example preparing and delivering presentations with your classmates).

To begin with you may find this way of working challenging, but rest assured that we'll enable you to make this transition. You will have access to a comprehensive support system that will assist and encourage you, including personal tutors and welfare tutors who can help with both academic and welfare issues, and a [formal transition review \(https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/transitionreview/index.aspx\)](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/transitionreview/index.aspx) during your first year to check on your progress and offer you help for any particular areas where you need support.

Our Academic Skills Centre also offers you support with your learning. The centre is a place where you can develop your mathematical, academic writing and general academic skills. It is the centre's aim to help you to become a more effective and independent learner through the use of a range of high-quality and appropriate learning support services. These range from drop-in sessions with support with mathematics and statistics based problems provided by experienced mathematicians, to workshops on a range of topics including note taking, reading, writing and presentation skills.

Employers value our graduates on the basis of our reputation for academic excellence and our student's considerable suite of skills and experiences gained over the course of their degree programme, hence our graduates are highly employable. Supporting our students in acquiring skills and experiences to enhance their employability is a key priority for us and is reflected in the way that we structure our academic programmes.

Your specialist observational placement

Your specialist observational placement forms an integral part of your Housing and Communities Pathway degree and there are a range of interesting opportunities available to you. Your internship will provide you with the opportunity to spend a dedicated block of time with a organisation or agency and so will provide you with an excellent means of developing a vivid and tangible sense of the connections between your academic studies and the world of employment. In addition to your placement, there are further options through which you can develop and broaden your experiences, helping you to build an excellent portfolio over the course of your degree programme. In addition, your various experiences will also provide you with opportunities to network and develop contacts, which can form valuable resources both during and upon completion of your degree. Systematic assessment and review of your progress is firmly built into your Housing and Communities Pathway degree through our tutoring system.



[Graduate Internship case study: Amy Davenport, Health Exchange \(2014\) \(/schools/social-policy/teaching/student-profiles/davenport-amy.aspx\)](https://schools/social-policy/teaching/student-profiles/davenport-amy.aspx)

Progress and tutoring

Your skill-set, talents and experiences which you bring with you to your Housing and Communities Pathway Degree are valuable resources and a baseline upon which we will build over the duration of your degree. A key source of support in that process is the tutoring system, which offers one-to-one tutoring across all three years of your programme, providing you with a personal and systematic approach to reviewing your progress, achievements and aspirations. You can also access the Academic Skills Centre that do focussed one-to-one and group workshop sessions to enable you to develop your wider academic skills. Over the course of your degree programme a wide range of opportunities for developing and enhancing your skill-set, experiences and so your employability will be available to you, examples of which are given below.

Agency placement experiences

You may wish to complement or build upon the experiences gained during your specialist observational placement, by undertaking a further optional agency placement. Agency placement experiences are systematically integrated into the broader structure of an academic module, thus providing you with critically informed and animated insights into the links between your academic work and the work of employers. Placements can be valuable in that they can thus provide you with a further gateway through which you can gain a wide range of employment relevant experiences such as developing insights into what happens when an issue emerges within an agency and how the issue unfolds, is negotiated and managed. Undertaking an agency placement in addition to an internship can also further contribute to developing your sense of self-confidence and competencies in an agency setting.



Further internship experiences?

You may be interested in gaining further, perhaps complementary internship experience over the course of your Housing and Communities Pathway Degree. If you think that this option could be of interest to you, then there are a range of resources and support available which can facilitate you. For example, in addition to our dedicated Careers Advisor, we also have a specialist Internship Officer located in the School of Social Policy, who works with and supports students in securing internship opportunities. In addition to structured inputs into the programme, our Internship Officer also has an active relationship with our student Social Policy Society, arranging events, workshops and talks in collaboration with our students.

Work experience

If you are interested in gaining work experience over the course of your Housing and Communities Pathway Degree, our specialist careers and employability advisor who holds regular surgeries, several days each week in the building in which we are based, will be able to provide you with support, advice and information about the many employers who are keen to offer opportunities to our undergraduates. The Guild also has a facility called [Jobzone \(http://www.guildofstudents.com/jobshop/\)](http://www.guildofstudents.com/jobshop/) which provides a wide and interesting range of opportunities for students. In addition, if you want to gain work experience in an area which is interesting or inspires you, but perhaps is low paid or unpaid, the University has a range of bursaries available which can enable you to do this.

Volunteering

Volunteering is a fantastic way to demonstrate your commitment to civic engagement, develop your employability skills, gain crucial work experience, network and meet new people. We actively encourage our students to gain experiences in voluntary agencies, both through our modules as well as through our links to the [Student Volunteering Service \(http://www.guildofstudents.com/\)](http://www.guildofstudents.com/), who provide our students with access to a wide range of experiences both here in the UK and abroad.

(<http://clic-ldu-echo.bham.ac.uk:8080/ess/echo/presentation/d829db62-03ec-4973-b121-9629dc1861af>)

Assessment methods

Studying at degree-level is likely to be very different from your previous experience of learning and teaching. You will be expected to think, discuss and engage critically with the subject and find things out for yourself. We will enable you to make this transition to a [new style of learning \(https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/transitionreview/index.aspx\)](https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/transitionreview/index.aspx), and the way that you are assessed during your studies will help you develop the essential skills you need to make a success of your time at Birmingham.

You'll be assessed in a variety of ways, and these may be different with each module that you take. You will be assessed through coursework which may take the form of essays, group and individual presentations, laboratory-based work (depending on your chosen degree) and formal exams.

During your first year you will undergo a formal **'transition' review** (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/transitionreview/index.aspx>) to see how you are getting on and if there are particular areas where you need support. This is in addition to the personal tutor who is based in your school or department and can help with any academic issues you encounter.

At the beginning of each module, you'll be given information on how and when you'll be assessed for that particular programme of study. You'll receive feedback on each assessment within four weeks, so that you can learn from and build on what you have done. You'll be given feedback on any exams that you take; if you should fail an exam we will ensure that particularly detailed feedback is made available to enable you to learn for the future.

We use a wide range of teaching methods and assessments, including a range of e-Learning mediums such as Canvas, Wikis and podcasting; workshops, presentations, seminars, classes, briefing papers, policy reports, project work and essays. A typical assessment for modules is 50% coursework and 50% examination. Some modules are 100% coursework. Students are able to choose some modules according to their personal strengths and preferences both in relation to subject matter and assessment methods. Your third-year dissertation, which is research-based, is supervised by an academic tutor. All students have the support of their own personal tutor throughout their degree, and access to welfare tutors if they have specific support needs.

Related staff

Tina Hearn (</staff/profiles/social-policy/hearn-tina.aspx>)

Employability

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Preparation for your career should be one of the first things you think about as you start university. Whether you have a clear idea of where your future aspirations lie or want to consider the broad range of opportunities available once you have a Birmingham degree, our **Careers Network** (</undergraduate/careers/careers-network.aspx>) can help you achieve your goal.



Our unique careers guidance service is tailored to your academic subject area, offering a specialised team (in each of the five academic colleges) who can give you expert advice. Our team source exclusive **work experience opportunities** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/careers/work-experience.aspx>) to help you stand out amongst the competition, with **mentoring** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/internships/mentoring/index.aspx>), **global internships** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/generic/internships/index.aspx>) and placements available to you. Once you have a career in your sights, one-to-one support with CV's and job applications will help give you the edge. In addition, our employer-endorsed award-winning **Personal Skills Award (PSA)** (</undergraduate/careers/psa.aspx>) recognises your extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.

We also offer voluntary work which complements your studies by helping you gain practical experiences in occupational settings while contributing back to society. This can bring new skills that will be useful throughout your future and can make a positive impact on your learning whilst at university. Volunteering enables you to develop skills such as communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, self-confidence and self-discipline, all of which can be transferred into your studies.

Your Birmingham degree is evidence of your ability to succeed in a demanding academic environment. Employers target Birmingham students for their drive, diversity, communication and problem-solving skills, their team-working abilities and cultural awareness, and our graduate employment statistics have continued to climb at a rate well above national trends. If you make the most of the wide range of services you will be able to develop your career from the moment you arrive.

Career opportunities

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With an emphasis on examining contemporary housing issues and debates, as well as exploring the range of ways in which responses to those issues are and could be formed, the work that you undertake on your Housing and Communities Pathway Degree makes strong connections with the concerns of a very wide range of employers and key professions. This means that the programme is a positive choice for students who are interested in enhancing their employment prospects through their choice

of degree programme. Whilst the Housing and Communities Pathway Degree will enable you to specialise, it is also a degree programme which has flexibility too. This means that it is possible for the group of students who undertake this degree programme to craft their degree in a way such that it reflects their developing personal interests, skills, experiences and career aspirations.

There are a wide range of agencies which have both a direct and indirect focus upon housing issues, many of which run excellent graduate management training schemes, some examples would include:

- Voluntary organisations
- Housing Associations
- Charities and campaigning organisations such as 'Crisis' or 'Shelter'
- Advice Agencies such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Journalism, for specialist professional journals and more broadly
- Health organisations
- Local government
- Probation work
- Agencies who deal with issues such as domestic violence or homeless young people
- International agencies such as Voluntary Services Overseas

Your Housing and Communities Pathway Degree and Employability

Experiences you can gain as a Housing and Communities Pathway degree student, through your specialist internship, modules placements, work experiences and volunteering, are an excellent way of enriching your CV so that it includes that all important 'experience' that employers so often look for. When interviewed for your first job, you will often find that employers have a keen interest in how far you have developed your appreciation of the connections between your academic subject and the work of their organisations – through your specialist internship and experiences of placements, voluntary work, work experience and beyond, Housing and Communities Pathway Degree students are very well placed to respond with confidence and competence.

[Graduate Internship case study: Amy Davenport, Health Exchange \(/schools/social-policy/teaching/student-profiles/davenport-amy.aspx\)](/schools/social-policy/teaching/student-profiles/davenport-amy.aspx)



Amy Davenport, BA Social Policy (2013) "Overall, I feel that my internship has served me well and has given me a lot of confidence and a better skill set for my career. My view on social enterprises has changed enormously, as I now have a new understanding of its fast-paced nature and the importance it has in delivering to communities that may find it difficult to get help and support from other, more traditional access points. Looking beyond my internship, I now find myself looking for what social enterprises there are and what opportunities they have."

The Homes and Communities sector employs over 150,000 people in England. In addition to government departments and the Homes and Communities Agency, there are around 1,800 housing associations managing over 2 million homes, local authorities and arms length organisations manage a further 2 million, and there is a wide range of third sector housing bodies covering topics such as homelessness, financial inclusion and housing advice.

Housing employers are increasingly looking for employees with a broad-based degree and an understanding of the connections between home and community and wider social policy issues that your degree will equip you with. There will be opportunities to gain more specific housing-based skills after your degree for example, through the Chartered Institute of Housing's suite of blended learning and direct final qualifications.

According to the Chartered Institute of Housing website, "Working in housing is not just about the building, it's about making a positive difference to people's lives, their communities and their life chances by providing them with a decent home and environment in which to live. Over 150,000 people are estimated to work in the affordable housing sector in the UK. A career in housing is exciting and can provide an incredible variety of options, from housing management, to residential involvement and from development to supported housing - to mention just a few. Put simply, if you want to make a positive difference working in housing is for you!"

Opportunities to secure a career that is right for you, can be enhanced not only through the wide range of experiences that are available to you through your degree programme, but also through the wealth of resources and support that is available through our specialist [Careers Network \(/undergraduate/careers/careers-network.aspx\)](/undergraduate/careers/careers-network.aspx).

Richard



Richard took the single honours social policy degree. He decided to study social policy as it allowed him to study a wide range of subjects and issues. Over the course of his studies, Richard enjoyed the criminal justice and diversity modules. Richard graduated with a 2:1 and worked for a youth charity in London, providing after-school activities for young people and leadership training for hundreds of young adults, to enable them to lead in the organisations' residential supper programmes. Since then Richard has progressed to work for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) on their National Graduate Programme.

As part of the programme, Richard works in prisons directly with the residents and is on a fast-track scheme to becoming a prison governor working his way through the operational roles in prison. Richard feels that the knowledge and skills he gained from his degree, in addition to the fantastic support and guidance he had access to while at Birmingham, has aided him on his prestigious career path.

He would recommend the Social Policy BA to anyone looking to engage in interdisciplinary study.

Naqeeb Ahmed



Naqeeb studied Social Policy at Birmingham and over the course of his studies, particularly enjoyed exploring the theme of citizenship and how government policy affected the lives of citizens. On leaving University, he wanted to work in an environment where he would be involved in key contemporary issues. He therefore took up a research internship with the Young Foundation in London, which involved undertaking literature reviews, researching case studies and drafting articles, speeches and briefings.

He then moved on to Bellenden Public Affairs (BPA) where he was involved in providing communications and research support. This included drafting political briefings and conducting media monitoring for clients such as UK Youth. His internship at BPA was followed by an internship at Society Media. Here, he provided project support for an initiative aimed at creating an index of the top 100 social enterprises in the UK.

Naqeeb now works for the Citizenship Foundation in London where his work involves coordinating the nationwide Young Muslim Leadership Network, an initiative designed to promote civic engagement amongst young people. His role is very diverse and incorporates an element of project management and the implementation of governmental policy. Naqeeb feels his achievements thus far are a testament to having studied in a first class academic environment, hard work, commitment and perseverance.

Naila Begum



I found the Social Policy Department to be very supportive and personal tutors prioritise the welfare of students and ensure that they are on task with their academic work. I particularly enjoyed the Crime and Justice Modules as they provided me with really good insights into the way that public issues can influence the way that the law develops. My dissertation focused on Islamophobia and education as I was interested in researching the nature and prevalence of this issue. During my studies, I also had an invaluable opportunity to volunteer with a charity which assisted women suffering from domestic violence. This not only enabled me to enhance the diverse skills I gained from the course, but also the opportunity to make a real difference to people's lives.

After completing my undergraduate degree, I successfully completed the Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies (GDLs) at the College of Law at the University, and found that the knowledge gained from studying Social Policy is very relevant to different areas of Law. As a member of the Pro-Bono group at the University of Birmingham, I have taken part in various activities which focus on social policy issues, for example, providing information to people about parental rights at the Birmingham Probation Office. My undergraduate degree in Social Policy at the University of Birmingham was the most incredible 3 years. I would thoroughly recommend a social policy degree for anybody with an interest in law. The expertise and knowledge that I gained from studying Social Policy has opened up an excellent career path for me which is a priceless asset to have in today's competitive world.

Caroline Cresswell



Caroline came to the University of Birmingham in 2005 and has since completed both the BA Social Policy and MA Social Research Programmes. She says "I've recently started my PhD here in Social Policy. The decision to come to university as a mature student has definitely changed the course of my life. There's not much else I'd rather be doing!"

"I am enjoying the autonomy of carrying out my own research whilst also being aware that support from within the department is here if necessary. The IASS has a friendly atmosphere making it a good working environment. It is also a very dynamic and exciting department to be part of at the moment given the breadth of research interests amongst the academic staff and students and success in the research ratings."

Asha Kaur



Asha Kaur decided to study Social Policy at Birmingham because the subject provided opportunities to study contemporary issues, plus the flexibility to study a wide range of subject areas before deciding upon her future career direction. Asha found the Social Policy department to be highly supportive and committed to their students and the subjects they taught. After completing her degree, Asha decided to study law at Birmingham and gain legal qualifications; she found that many of the skills and areas of knowledge gained whilst studying Social Policy, formed an excellent preparation for studying law.

After completing her legal studies Asha accepted a graduate position with a top legal head-hunting firm. With a view to developing her career around issues to which she has a particular commitment, Asha has recently begun studying for a masters degree in International Human Rights Law; she also volunteers at the Refugee Council, blending her interests in Social Policy, Law and Social Justice. Asha feels her degree in Social Policy provided her with excellent preparation for the world of graduate employment and thoroughly recommends it to anyone who has a passion for social justice and to those who are currently undecided about their career path.

Sam King



One of the features I valued most about the Social Policy programme at Birmingham University, was that it offered me a broad and varied programme of study; I particularly enjoyed the modules on criminal justice. Studying at Birmingham was a fantastic time for me, I was able to combine an active social life with academic work. The support and encouragement from staff really helped, and made for a very enjoyable three years.

Since then, I've completed the Masters in Social Research and a PhD, both at Birmingham. I've been able to develop my interest in criminal justice, and have focused upon desistance from crime and the role of the Probation Service. I've received great support from staff along the way, and have been given the opportunity to gain substantial teaching experience on a range of modules. I feel confident that the experiences I've had while studying at Birmingham will stand me in good stead as I begin my academic career as a lecturer, and have fond memories of my time there.

Will Monaghan



Will Monaghan studied social policy at Birmingham University. He had a particular interest in refugees and the way faith interacts with politics. His dissertation focused on whether or not the government should fund faith schools. In his final year he applied for several positions, all within the public sector, as he developed an interest in government services over the course of his Social Policy degree.

Will is now working as the Cancer Commissioning Manager for Bristol Primary Care Trust, as part of the NHS graduate management training scheme. As part of the training scheme, Will is undertaking a Masters degree in Health and Public Sector leadership based at Birmingham and Manchester Universities. Will loved the time he spent with fellow social policy students and the parties that followed essay hand in days! He continues to benefit from the things he learnt and the people he studied under at Birmingham.

Jo Robinson



The Social Policy degree programme really suited me as it combined two of my favourite A-level topics, Sociology and Politics, as well as other disciplines. The dynamic and flexible nature of the programme also provided the opportunity to focus my studies on my own personal interests. I particularly enjoyed learning about the history of social policy and political and social theory, which formed the basis of my dissertation; the freedom to choose a topic that I was interested in made my dissertation work really enjoyable.

Due to the dynamic nature of teaching and learning methods I have developed a range of key skills such as: report writing, individual and group presentation skills, research and analytical abilities and creative skills such as creating a motion presentation. The Social Policy into Practice module enabled me to develop both practical work based skills and also apply my academic knowledge to real life employment through a placement at the Citizens Advice Bureau. I also gained really valuable experience through an internship at a major Local Authority, working as a research assistant, where I produced a piece of work based on 'Timebanks', a new kind of mutualism. In my final year I was the secretary for the Social Policy Society and helped to organise and host many successful events, including pub crawls, quizzes, curry nights and a successful careers event.

Throughout my three years I had many great experiences and excellent support from the department. As a result I graduated with a 2:1 honours degree and developed a great passion for social policy which inspired me to create a blog so that I can continue to comment on issues and debates that I really care about. I would definitely recommend this degree to anyone who is interested in the wide spectrum of social issues faced by society both past and present.

Hannah Smith



I chose to study Social Policy at the University of Birmingham, because the degree programme covers such a broad range of contemporary social issues and enables students to take a focus on their particular interests. I particularly enjoyed learning about young people, the third sector and the history of the welfare state and loved the freedom of being able to write a dissertation on a topic of my own choice in my final year. The social policy programme helped me to develop skills such as research, report-writing, presentations and policy analysis, skills I was able to use in activities outside of the university setting, too. For example, I undertook an internship as a social research assistant with a small charity working with Bosnian refugees; I also volunteered with a national charity, raising young peoples' awareness of global poverty issues.

Throughout my three years at Birmingham, I had fantastic support from the lecturers in terms of writing essays and feedback and was also encouraged to continue with my studies. As a result, I graduated with a 2:1 and have been accepted to study a Masters in Socio-Legal Studies at the University of Bristol which combines social

policy with law, as well as social research methods training. I am currently employed in a major Housing Association and am engaged in a really interesting and inspiring area of work, exploring the housing needs of vulnerable people.

I would recommend Social Policy to anyone who is interested in exploring and discovering more about society and contemporary social issues. My time at the University of Birmingham was life-changing; I wouldn't have chosen any other university to study at!

Josie Smith



I gained a place at the University of Birmingham through the Access to Birmingham (A2B) Scheme and chose the Social Policy programme due to its highly contemporary and interdisciplinary nature. I enjoyed the fact that a wide range of topics were covered over the course of the programme and became particularly interested in the themes of housing and globalisation and focussed my third year research dissertation on exploring the implications and impacts of globalisation on social policy. I successfully completed the Personal Skills Award module which provided me with a range of highly transferrable skills and in the role of Academic Events Representative I also organised a very successful careers event this year for the Social Policy Society.

The Careers and employability support provided was very good indeed; I was able to gain a range of valuable experiences, for example, an internship in the Corporate Strategy Team of a major Local Authority, working on a project exploring the rights and duties of local authorities as embodied in the Localism Act 2011. I am currently planning to undertake some further research in a third sector organisation.

The support I received over my three years was excellent and at the end of the programme I was delighted to graduate with a First class honours degree. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Social Policy programme and would highly recommend this course to anyone wishing to gain a wide range of experiences and skills and succeed in their chosen careers.

George Wilson



George took the single honours social policy degree. Over the course of his studies, George enjoyed the criminal justice modules and developed a particular interest in British Security Policy and Counter Terrorism, a topic which he chose to form the focus of his final year dissertation in which explored the impacts of Security Policies upon British Muslims. During his degree, George also competed for the University of Birmingham men's football team, was a student representative and gained work experience at a top human rights law firm and the Metropolitan Police.

Graduating with a 2:1, the knowledge gained during his degree contributed to George's success in the initial stages of an application to the Metropolitan police. However, George was also offered a football scholarship at a prestigious university in North Carolina to complete a Master in Liberal Arts and Sciences which he accepted. George feels that the knowledge and skills gained from his degree and the unparalleled support and guidance of his academic supervisors over his time in Birmingham have been the catalyst for an incredible 3 years, and would recommend the degree to anyone looking to engage in interdisciplinary study.

Siying Poole



I chose to study at the University of Birmingham because of its international prestige and excellent reputation in both academic research and teaching. The successful completion of an Access to Higher Education diploma enabled me to join this dynamic and vibrant university as a mature student.

Throughout my degree programme, my expectations were fulfilled in every single respect: my subjects were intellectually interesting and challenging; my lecturers provided inspiration and support and comprehensive welfare and social life programs were available from Student Services. A degree in Political Science and Social Policy has enabled me to gain a variety of valuable skills. These include verbal and written communication skills, research and analytical skills, project management, team working, IT skills in research software including NVIVO and SPSS, and the creation of wikis and the use of other social media such as facebook and twitter.

Whilst studying at the University, I have researched intensively into the Third Sector and my voluntary work at Birmingham Children's Hospital has complemented and informed my research in this area. I have worked closely with consultants and nurses at the Dermatology Department and have chaired an eczema support group since 2009. I successfully completed my degree in July 2012 and obtained a high 2:1 and a 1st with my thesis. Overall, my degree programme has provided me with a really solid foundation for a career in the public or third sector.

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